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THE

GULL

MONTHLY

BULLETIN

Volume 55 Berkeley, California July-August 1973 Number 7 & 8

SECOND RARE ALBATROSS IN TOWN

FOR THE SECOND TIME in two months, a wayward albatross has found its way to the Bay Area. (Our earlier visitor was the first Laysan Albatross ever to reach this coast.) The new arrival is a Short-tailed Albatross, which ranges in the Western Pacific near the Bonin Islands. The species is quite rare; only 50 or so individuals are thought to be extant.

The albatross landed and became fouled in the rigging of a Greek freighter on its way to San Francisco. The crew cared for the bird for 17 days until the ship arrived here in early May. Enroute, The albatross enjoyed a highly Greek but distinctly unalbatrossian menu of olives, Feta cheese, and Polish sausage. Having survived this rich fare and the rigors of a long sea voyage, the bird was turned over to the San Francisco zoo, where it was returned to its normal diet of fish. After a short stay in the area, the albatross was flown to Hawaii for release. Presumably it is now back home, no worse off for having ignored the ancient admonition to beware of Greeks bearing gifts. MIKE WIHLER

FIELD TRIPS FOR JULY AND AUGUST

Saturday and Sunday, July 14-15: CALIFORNIA ALPINE CLUB LODGE at Echo Summit in the Sierra. On both days, we will begin birding in the vicinity of the lodge at **6 A.M.** Regular field trips will begin at **8:30 A.M.:** on Saturday to Benwood Meadow and Pope Beach and on Sunday to Echo Lake. For reservations and additional details, see the June *Gull*. Organizer, Pat Triggs (664-8502).

Saturday, July 28: Bus trip down the PENINSULA to see Murres, Purple Martins, and Black Swifts among others. A bus will be chartered for this trip and will pick up passengers at the following locations:

Oakland: at the corner of Bellvue and Perkins streets near the Rotary Natural Science Center in Lakeside Park. The bus will leave promptly at **7:10 A.M.**

San Francisco: at the corner of Grove and Larkin streets in front of the Civic Auditorium. The bus will leave promptly at **7:30 A.M.**

Princeton/Half Moon Bay: at the municipal pier in Princeton (which is off highway one a few miles north of Half Moon Bay) near the intersection of Highway One and Capistrano Road. The bus will leave at **8:30 A.M.**

Make reservations with Pat Triggs, preferably by mail. Send a check for \$5.00 per person made out to Golden Gate Audubon. (See back-page roster for Pat Triggs' address.) Include your telephone number in case of last-minute changes. **Deadline: July 18.** If you prefer to drive, meet the bus at the Princeton Pier. *Leader, Ted Chandik (493-5330).*

Saturday and Sunday, August 11 and 12: Warren Larsen is stationed at EAGLE LAKE CAMPGROUND in Lassen County this summer and has invited GGAS members to join him on a camping trip. On Saturday, he will lead a nature walk and show us where the Osprey nests. If you plan to go, notify him at the following address: U.S. Forest Service, c/o Eagle Lake District Office, Susanville, California. Eagle Lake is 17 miles north of Susanville on Highway 139.

TWO GGAS PELAGIC TRIPS

ON SATURDAY, September 22 and Sunday, October 7, the Golden Gate Audubon Society will sponsor boat trips for those interested in viewing and studying migrating sea birds. Boats are scheduled to leave from Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey at **9 A.M.** and return between **2 and 3 P.M.** Fare will be \$10 per person. Please send your check (payable to Golden Gate Audubon) along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Golden Gate Audubon, Boat Trip, P.O. Box 5022, Berkeley 94705. Names and addresses of guests must be included along with your payment. Details on where to meet will be sent to you along with acknowledgement of payment. Reservations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis and will close when the boats are filled.

FIELD TRIPS REPORT

FIFTEEN PERSONS spent May 5-6 at the Pinnacles for a wonderful weekend of birding. We found a total of 71 birds, which far exceeded last year's list. Perhaps the most exciting observation—and a life-bird for many—was the Black-chinned Hummingbird. The male was seen first among a group of red thistles, and later we had a very close view of the female sitting on her nest. We also had a good look at a Western Flycatcher on her nest tucked into a groove in the cliff along the trail. The hawks were Cooper's, Sharp-shinned and Red-tailed. Also a Golden Eagle. The Great Horned and the Screech Owl were heard in the evening, and several Poorwills were calling. Another highlight was numerous Canyon Wrens with their lovely song echoing up and down the canyon. We had brief views of Bullock's Oriole, Swainson's Thrush, Western Tanager, and the Yellow-breasted Chat was heard but not seen. The warblers were Townsend's, Yellow, Hermit, Audubon's and Wilson's. Several Lawrence's Goldfinches were seen and many Lazuli Buntings contributed their colorful beauty for all to enjoy.

May 13, 1973 — Mt. Diablo — In the chaparral below the ranger station everybody had excellent views of the Black-chinned Sparrow, and farther up the mountain several Sage Sparrows were easily seen; also the Calif Thrasher. In the oak trees were Swainson's Thrush, Townsends's Wilson's, Hermit, and Yellow warblers, and down in one of the lower canyons, the Purple Finch and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. On the return trip via the north road several Phainopeplas were seen, unusual for this area. Total of 60. There was also a lovely display of wildflowers—thousands of red thistles dotted the hillside up near Juniper Camp, a beautiful cluster of wind poppies were seen, and the colinsea were every where.

A small, but enthusiastic group came out on the Hetch Hetchy trip on a weekend that was unexpectedly warm. We saw seven species of warblers including Macgillivrays, Nashville, and Black-throated Gray. Five flycatchers, including the Dusky, several Rock Wrens and Canyon Wrens. Also the Green-tailed Towhee, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and White-headed Woodpecker. Total of 68. A few dogwood were in bloom, the corn lily was beginning to show, the swampy areas were covered with a small pink and yellow mimulus, and harlequin lupin lined the roadsides. PAT TRIGGS, *Field Trips Chairman*.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Pygmy Owl, May 21, above Alpine Dam, Marin Co.—WMP, AM.

Saw-whet Owl, April 4, Redwood Regional Park—VR; near lower Mill Trail, same park, June 5, 6—VH, GH.

Costa's Hummingbird, May 6, lower Del Puerto Canyon (south of Livermore)—VR, BP *et. al.*

Phainopepla, 3 males, May 13, Mt. Diablo—JH.

Nashville Warbler male, May 8, Mt. Diablo—JH.

Chestnut-sided Warbler male, June 2, Rodeo Lagoon—MLR. (One was there July 1, 1971.)

Rose-breasted Grosbeak male, May 22, Battery Wallace, Rodeo Lagoon—MLR.

Evening Grosbeak, 1 male, 2 female, May 30, Oakland garden—KH, MH.

Observers: Kathryn & Milward Harris, John Hollis, Vi & George Homem, Alice Mericourt, Bill Principe, William M. Pursell, Van Remsen, Mary Louise Rosegay. We have a file of other spring and summer observations to be summarized in the next *Gull*. VI HOMEM, *Observations Chairman*.

AOU CHECKLIST REVISED

THE APRIL 1973 issue of *The Auk*, the journal of the American Ornithologists Union, published the 32nd supplement to the AOU Checklist. The supplement includes all changes accepted by the AOU Committee on Classification and Nomenclature since the publication of the fifth

edition of the AOU Checklist in 1957. Virtually all field guides and local checklists are based on the 1957 AOU Checklist, so presumably new editions of many of these will be forthcoming.

The AOU Checklist is the official roster of species of birds used by ornithologists and birdwatchers in the United States and Canada. Contrary to popular belief, a species is not a fixed entity. The very notion of a species is a human invention of convenience that nature itself ignores. Whether the Yellow-shafted and Red-shafted Flickers are two distinct species or two races of a single species makes little difference to the birds themselves. They go on doing much the same things they always have regardless of what we choose to call them. But for the distinctly human purposes of birdwatching and ornithology, classification and nomenclature are essential. Man has a powerful impulse to name things so that he may know them. The purpose of the AOU Checklist is partly to ensure that we all apply the same names to the same birds and thereby understand each other. One need only examine the nicknames conferred by hunters on ducks to understand the potential onomastic chaos that can exist in the absence of some central authority.

But the AOU Checklist also reflects our latest understanding of various bird populations. As research continues and grows more sophisticated, our previously held notions are changed. Oldtimers have seen numerous changes of the sort represented by the 32nd supplement to the checklist and know that professional ornithologists are constantly revising their ideas—as they well should. But such revisions can play havoc with lifelists, expanding them as two races of one species become two distinct species and—alas—contracting them as two formerly separate species suddenly become one. Yet for most of us, the bird is the thing, and whether we gain or lose a few names on our lifelist remains of secondary importance.

In any case, the more significant changes in classification and nomenclature in the 32nd supplement to the AOU Checklist are reprinted below.

The following list consists of formerly separate species that have been merged into a single species: *Great White Heron* becomes GREAT BLUE HERON; *Blue Goose* becomes SNOW GOOSE; *Common Teal* becomes GREEN-WINGED TEAL; *Harlan's Hawk* becomes RED-TAILED HAWK; *Yellow-shafted*, *Red-shafted*, and *Gilded Flicker* become COMMON FLICKER; *Black-eared Bush-tit* and *Common Bush-tit* become BUSHTIT; *Bahama Honey-creeper* becomes BANANAQUIT; *Audubon Warbler* and *Myrtle Warbler* becomes YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER; *Bullock's Oriole* and *Baltimore Oriole* become NORTHERN ORIOLE; *Ipswich Sparrow* becomes SAVANNAH SPARROW; *Dusky Seaside Sparrow* and *Cape Sable Sparrow* become SEASIDE SPARROW; *Slate-colored*, *White-winged*, *Oregon*, and *Guadalupe Juncos* become DARK-EYED JUNCO; *Mexican Junco* becomes YELLOW-EYED JUNCO.

The following list consists of formerly single species that have been separated into two or more distinct species: CHUKAR becomes a separate species from the European ROCK PARTRIDGE; THAYER'S GULL becomes a separate species from the HERRING GULL; *Trill's Flycatcher* becomes WILLOW FLYCATCHER and ALDER FLYCATCHER (Western species); GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE becomes a separate species from BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE.

The following list consists of changes in the names of various species. These changes do not reflect any change in their status as species: *Fulmar* becomes NORTHERN FULMAR; *Pale-footed Shearwater* becomes FLESH-FOOTED SHEARWATER; *Slender-billed Shearwater* becomes SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATER; Petrels of the *Hydrobatidae* family will now be called STORM PETRELS (i. e. *Leach's Petrel* becomes LEACH'S STORM PETREL and *Fork-tailed Petrel* becomes FORK-TAILED STORM PETREL.) *Common Egret* becomes GREAT EGRET; *Wood Ibis* becomes WOOD STORK; *Widgeon* is now spelled WIGEON; *Shoveler* becomes NORTHERN SHOVELER; *Common Scoter* becomes BLACK SCOTER; *Gray Sea Eagle* becomes WHITE-TAILED EAGLE; *Pigeon Hawk* becomes MERLIN; *Sparrow Hawk* becomes AMERICAN KESTREL; *Harlequin Quail* becomes MONTEZUMA QUAIL; *Upland Plover* becomes UPLAND SANDPIPER; *Knot* becomes RED KNOT; *Robin* becomes AMERICAN ROBIN; *Catbird* becomes GRAY CATBIRD; *Yellowthroat* becomes COMMON YELLOWTHROAT; *Parula Warbler* becomes NORTHERN PARULA.

These changes are effective immediately. For further information, consult the April 1973 issue of *The Auk*.

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In memory of:

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GIFTS OF REMEMBRANCE were made to Audubon Canyon Ranch:

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| Police Sergeant Code Beverly | Liesse Beverly |
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| William Gorski | Mr. & Mrs. T. J. Rogers |
| Bud Simon | Miss Tommy F. Angell, Orinda Girl Scout Troop 1035 |
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DR. ALBERT BOLES, Sanctuary and Memorial Fund Chairman, 854 Longridge Road, Oakland 94610 (415-6267).



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1973

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Send address changes to Membership Secretary promptly; Post Office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings—second Thursday 7:30 p.m. Joint membership—Local & National \$12 per year, (individual); \$15 (family); includes *AUDUBON MAGAZINE* and *THE GULL*. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$2 per year. High school & college student membership \$6 per year.

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month.